

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-30 (canceled)

Claim 31 (currently amended): A method comprising:

determining a system state indicative of whether a system is connected to a network; ~~and~~
loading either a first module of a basic input/output system or a second module of the basic input/output system based on the system state; and
requesting a first level of authentication information or a second level of authentication information from a user based on the system state.

Claim 32 (previously presented): The method of claim 31, further comprising:

storing said first module of the basic input/output system on a first storage device prior to execution;

storing said second module of the basic input/output system on a second storage device prior to execution; and

enabling said second module to be executed conditionally depending on the system state.

Claim 33 (previously presented): The method of claim 32, wherein storing said second module includes storing said second module in a storage associated with a network server accessible to said system over the network.

Claim 34 (previously presented): The method of claim 31, including detecting whether or not the system is connected to the network during a boot sequence.

Claim 35 (previously presented): The method of claim 31, including dynamically linking to one of a plurality of modules, and exporting an offset to an entry point in one module to another module.

Claim 36 (previously presented): The method of claim 35, including storing a secondary entry point in a module to locate a function within the module.

Claim 37 (previously presented): The method of claim 36, including developing a segment address for said second module at run time.

Claim 38 (cancel)

Claim 39 (currently amended): The method of claim 31, further comprising authenticating [[a]] the user according to one of multiple levels based upon the system state, and obtaining a key from a protected storage if the user is authenticated.

Claim 40 (currently amended): An article comprising a medium for storing instructions that cause a system to:

determine a system state indicative of whether the system is connected to a network; ~~and~~
load either a first module of a basic input/output system or a second module of the basic input/output system based on the system state; and
requesting a first level of authentication information or a second level of authentication information from a user based on the system state.

Claim 41 (currently amended): The article of claim 40, further storing instructions that cause a system to:

access said first module of the basic input/output system on a first storage device of the system;

access said second module of the basic input/output system on a second storage device of the system; and

execute said second module conditionally depending on the system state.

Claim 42 (cancel)

Claim 43 (previously presented): The article of claim 41, further storing instructions that cause a system to execute said second module conditionally depending on whether or not the system is coupled to the network.

Claim 44 (previously presented): The article of claim 41, further storing instructions that cause a system to selectively access either a first module setting forth a first authentication

protocol in the first storage device or a second module setting forth a second authentication protocol in the second storage device based on the system state.

Claim 45 (previously presented): The article of claim 40, further storing instructions that cause a system to obtain a key from a protected storage if a user is authenticated.

Claim 46 (previously presented): The article of claim 40, further storing instructions that cause a system to dynamically link said first and second modules.

Claim 47 (previously presented): The article of claim 40, further storing instructions that cause a system to detect whether the system is connected to the network during a boot sequence.

Claim 48 (previously presented): The article of claim 41, further storing instructions that cause a system to dynamically link to one of a plurality of modules using offsets to entry points in said modules.

Claim 49 (previously presented): The article of claim 48, further storing instructions that cause a system to store a secondary entry point in a module to locate a function within the module.

Claim 50 (previously presented): The article of claim 49, further storing instructions that cause a system to develop a segment address for said second module at run time.

Claim 51 (currently amended): A system comprising:
a first basic input/output system module stored in a first storage of the system, the first basic input/output system module executable by a processor; and

a second basic input/output system module stored in a second storage of the system, the second basic input/output system module executable by said processor; and

the processor to load either said first basic input/output system module or said second basic input/output system module based on a system state that indicates a connection to a network.

Claim 52 (cancel)

Claim 53 (currently amended): The system of claim ~~[[52]]~~ 51, ~~including a first storage for said first module and a second~~ further comprising a third basic input/output module

stored in a third storage ~~for said second module~~, said ~~second~~ third storage being coupled to said system over the network.

Claim 54 (cancel)

Claim 55 (currently amended): The system of claim 51, wherein said first and second basic input/output system modules include different authentication protocols.

Claim 56 (currently amended): The system of claim ~~[[53]]~~ 55, wherein said processor to execute said second basic input/output system module ~~on said second storage~~ to implement a network authentication protocol.

Claim 57 (new): The method of claim 31, wherein the first level of authentication information is greater than the second level of authentication information and further comprising requesting the first level of authentication information if the system is connected to the network.

Claim 58 (new): The system of claim 53, further comprising a fourth basic input/output system module stored in a fourth storage.

Claim 59 (new): The system of claim 58, further comprising a card reader coupled to the processor, the card reader to read a card, wherein the card comprises the fourth storage.

Claim 60 (new): The system of claim 58, wherein the fourth storage comprises a smart card.

Claim 61 (new): The method of claim 31, further comprising executing the loaded one of the first basic input/output system module or the second basic input/output system module to request the authentication information from the user and authenticate the user.

Claim 62 (new): The method of claim 31, wherein the first level of authentication information includes presence of a smart card in the system.

Claim 63 (new): The method of claim 61, further comprising authenticating the user a second time after an operating system is loaded.